THE GRAND CANYON

BY HENRY VAN DYKE



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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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THE GRAND CANYON

THE GRAND CANYON AND OTHER POEMS

By

HENRY VAN DYKE

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THE GRAND CANYON
AND OTHER POEMS

THE GRAND CANYON

DAYBREAK

WHAT makes the lingering Night so cling to thee?
Thou vast, profound, primeval hiding-place
Of ancient secrets, — gray and ghostly gulf
Cleft in the green of this high forest land,
And crowded in the dark with giant forms!
Art thou a grave, a prison, or a shrine?

A stillness deeper than the dearth of sound
Broods over thee: a living silence breathes
Perpetual incense from thy dim abyss.
The morning-stars that sang above the bower
Of Eden, passing over thee, are dumb
With trembling bright amazement; and the Dawn
Steals through the glimmering pines with naked feet,
Her hand upon her lips, to look on thee.
She peers into thy depths with silent prayer
For light, more light, to part thy purple veil.
O Earth, swift-rolling Earth, reveal, reveal,
Turn to the East, and show upon thy breast
The mightiest marvel in the realm of Time!

'Tis done, — the morning miracle of light, —
The resurrection of the world of hues
That die with dark, and daily rise again
With every rising of the splendid Sun!

Be still, my heart! Now Nature holds her breath
To see the vital flood of radiance leap
Across the chasm; and crest the farthest rim
Of alabaster with a glistening white
Rampart of pearl; and flowing down by walls
Of changeful opal, deepen into gold
Of topaz, rosy gold of tourmaline,
Crimson of garnet, green and gray of jade,
Purple of amethyst, and ruby red,
Beryl, and sard, and royal porphyry;
Until the cataract of colour breaks
Upon the blackness of the granite floor.

How far below! And all between is cleft
And carved into a hundred curving miles
Of unimagined architecture! Tombs,
Temples, and colonnades are neighbored there
By fortresses that Titans might defend,
And amphitheatres where Gods might strive.
Cathedrals, buttressed with unnumbered tiers
Of ruddy rock, lift to the sapphire sky
A single spire of marble pure as snow;
And huge aërial palaces arise
Like mountains built of unconsuming flame.
Along the weathered walls, or standing far
In riven valleys where no foot may tread,
Are lonely pillars, and tall monuments
Of perished æons and forgotten things.

My sight is baffled by the close array
Of countless forms: my vision reels and swims
Above them, like a bird in whirling winds.
Yet no confusion fills the awful chasm;
But spacious order and a sense of peace
Are wide diffused. For every shape that looms
Majestic in the throng, is set apart
From all the others by its far-flung shade, —
Blue, blue, as if a mountain-lake were there.

How still it is! Dear God, I hardly dare
To breathe, for fear the fathomless abyss
Will draw me down into eternal sleep.

What force has formed this masterpiece of awe?
What hands have wrought these wonders in the waste?
O river, gleaming in the narrow rift
Of gloom that cleaves the valley's nether deep, —
Fierce Colorado, prisoned by thy toil,
And blindly toiling still to reach the sea, —
Thy waters, gathered from the snows and springs
Amid the Utah hills, have carved this road
Of glory to the Californian Gulf.
But now, O sunken stream, thy splendour lost,
'Twixt iron walls thou rollest turbid waves,
Too far away to make their fury heard!

At sight of thee, thou sullen labouring slave
Of gravitation, — yellow torrent poured
From distant mountains by no will of thine,
Through thrice a hundred centuries of slow
Fallings and liftings of the crust of Earth, —
At sight of thee my spirit sinks and fails.
Art thou alone the Maker? Is the blind
And thoughtless power that drew thee dumbly down
To cut this gash across the layered globe,
The sole creative cause of all I see?
Are force and matter all? The rest a dream?

Then is thy gorge a canyon of despair,
A prison for the soul of man, a grave
Of all his dearest daring hopes! The world
Wherein we live and move is meaningless,
No spirit here to answer to our own!
The stars without a guide! The chance-born Earth
Adrift in space, no Captain on the ship!
Nothing in all the universe to prove
Eternal wisdom and eternal love!
And man, the latest accident of Time, —
Who thinks he loves, and longs to understand,
Who vainly suffers, and in vain is brave,
Who dupes his heart with immortality, —
Man is a living lie, — a bitter jest
Upon himself, — a conscious grain of sand
Lost in a desert of unconsciousness,
Thirsting for God and mocked by his own thirst.

Spirit of Beauty, mother of delight,
Thou fairest offspring of Omnipotence,
Inhabiting this lofty lone abode!
Speak to my heart again and set me free
From all these doubts that darken earth and heaven!
Who sent thee forth into the wilderness
To bless and comfort all who see thy face?
Who clad thee in this more than royal robe
Of rainbows? Who designed these jewelled thrones
For thee, and wrought these glittering palaces?
Who gave thee power upon the soul of man
To lift him up through wonder into joy?
God! let the radiant cliffs bear witness! God,
Let all the shining pillars signal — God!
He only, on the mystic loom of light,
Hath woven webs of loveliness to clothe
His most majestic works: and He alone
Hath delicately wrought the cactus-flower
To star the desert floor with rosy bloom.

O Beauty, handiwork of the Most High,
Where'er thou art He tells his Love to man,
And lo, the day breaks, and the shadows flee!

Now, far beyond all language and all art
In thy wild splendour, Canyon Marvellous,
The secret of thy stillness lies unveiled
In wordless worship! This is holy ground,—
Thou art no grave, no prison, but a shrine.
Garden of Temples filled with Silent Praise,
If God were blind thy Beauty could not be!

February 24–26, 1913.

SIERRA MADRE

O MOTHER mountains! billowing far to the snow-lands,
Robed in aërial amethyst, silver, and blue,
Why do ye look so proudly down on the lowlands?
What have their groves and gardens to do with you?

Theirs is the languorous charm of the orange and myrtle,
Theirs are the fruitage and fragrance of Eden of old, —
Broad-boughed oaks in the meadows fair and fertile,
Dark-leaved orchards gleaming with globes of gold.

You, in your solitude standing, lofty and lonely,
Bear neither garden nor grove on your barren breasts;
Rough is the rock-loving growth of your canyons, and only
Storm-battered pines and fir-trees cling to your crests.
Why are ye throned so high and arrayed in splendour

Richer than all the fields at your feet can claim?
What is your right, ye rugged peaks, to the tender
Queenly promise and pride of the mother-name?

Answered the mountains, dim in the distance dreaming:
"Ours are the forests that treasure the riches of rain;
Ours are the secret springs and the rivulets gleaming
Silverly down through the manifold bloom of the plain.

"Vain were the toiling of men in the dust of the dry land,
Vain were the plowing and planting in waterless fields,
Save for the life-giving currents we send from the sky-land,
Save for the fruit our embrace with the storm-cloud yields."

O mother mountains, Madre Sierra, I love you!
Rightly you reign o'er the vale that your bounty fills, —
Kissed by the sun, or with big, bright stars above you, —
I murmur your name and lift up mine eyes to the hills.

Pasadena, March, 1913.

TEXAS

A DEMOCRATIC ODE*

I

THE WILD BEES

ALL along the Brazos river,
All along the Colorado,
In the valleys and the lowlands
Where the trees were tall and stately,
In the rich and rolling meadows
Where the grass was full of wild-flowers,
Came a humming and a buzzing,
Came the murmur of a going
To and fro among the tree-tops,
Far and wide across the meadows.
And the red-men in their tepees
Smoked their pipes of clay and listened.
"What is this?" they asked in wonder;
"Who can give the sound a meaning?
Who can understand the language
Of a going in the tree-tops?"
Then the wisest of the Tejas
Laid his pipe aside and answered:
"O my brothers, these are people,
Very little, winged people,
Countless, busy, banded people,

*Read at the Dedication of the Rice Institute, Houston, Texas, October, 1912.

Coming humming through the timber.
These are tribes of bees, united
By a single aim and purpose,
To possess the Tejas' country,
Gather harvest from the prairies,
Store their wealth among the timber.
These are hive and honey makers,
Sent by Manito to warn us
That the white men now are coming,
With their women and their children.
Not the fiery filibusters
Passing wildly in a moment,
Like a flame across the prairies,
Like a whirlwind through the forest,
Leaving empty lands behind them!
Not the Mexicans and Spaniards,
Indolent and proud hidalgos,
Dwelling in their haciendas,
Dreaming, talking of tomorrow,
While their cattle graze around them,
And their fickle revolutions
Change the rulers, not the people!
Other folk are these who follow
When the wild-bees come to warn us;
These are hive and honey makers,
These are busy, banded people,
Roaming far to swarm and settle,
Working every day for harvest,
Fighting hard for peace and order,
Worshiping as queens their women,
Making homes and building cities
Full of riches and of trouble.

All our hunting-grounds must vanish,
All our lodges fall before them,
All our customs and traditions,
All our happy life of freedom,
Fade away like smoke before them.
Come, my brothers, strike your tepees,
Call your women, load your ponies!
Let us take the trail to westward,
Where the plains are wide and open,
Where the bison-herds are gathered
Waiting for our feathered arrows.
We will live as lived our fathers,
Gleaners of the gifts of nature,
Hunters of the unkept cattle,
Men whose women run to serve them.
If the toiling bees pursue us,
If the white men seek to tame us,
We will fight them off and flee them,
Break their hives and take their honey,
Moving westward, ever westward,
There to live as lived our fathers."
So the red-men drove their ponies,
With the tent-poles trailing after,
Out along the path to sunset,
While along the river valleys
Swarmed the wild-bees, the forerunners;
And the white men, close behind them,
Men of mark from old Missouri,
Men of daring from Kentucky,
Tennessee, Louisiana,
Men of many States and races,

Bringing wives and children with them,
Followed up the wooded valleys,
Spread across the rolling prairies,
Raising homes and reaping harvests.
Rude the toil that tried their patience,
Fierce the fights that proved their courage,
Rough the stone and tough the timber
Out of which they built their order!
Yet they never failed nor faltered,
And the instinct of their swarming
Made them one and kept them working,
Till their toil was crowned with triumph,
And the country of the Tejas
Was the fertile land of Texas.

II

THE LONE STAR

Behold a star appearing in the South —
A star that shines apart from other stars,
    Ruddy and fierce, like Mars!
Out of the reeking smoke of cannon's mouth
That veils the slaughter of the Alamo,
    Where heroes face the foe,
One man against a score, with blood-choked breath
Shouting the watchword, "Victory or Death —"
Out of the dreadful cloud that settles low
    On Goliad's plain,
Where thrice a hundred prisoners lie slain
Beneath the broken word of Mexico —
Out of the fog of factions and of feuds
    That ever drifts and broods
Above the bloody path of border war,
    Leaps the Lone Star!

What light is this that does not dread the dark?
What star is this that fights a stormy way
To San Jacinto's field of victory?
It is the fiery spark
That burns within the breast
Of Anglo-Saxon men, who can not rest
Under a tyrant's sway;
The upward-leading ray
That guides the brave who give their lives away
Rather than not be free!
O question not, but honour every name,
Travis and Crockett, Bowie, Bonham, Ward,
Fannin and King, all who drew the sword
And dared to die for Texan liberty!
Yea, write them all upon the roll of fame,
But no less love and equal honour give
To those who paid the longer sacrifice —
Austin and Houston, Burnet, Rusk, Lamar
And all the stalwart men who dared to live
Long years of service to the lonely star.

Great is the worth of such heroic souls:
Amid the strenuous turmoil of their deeds,
They clearly speak of something that controls
The higher breeds of men by higher needs
Than bees, content with honey in their hives!
    Ah, not enough the narrow lives
  On profitable toil intent!
And not enough the guerdons of success
Garnered in homes of affluent selfishness!
    A noble discontent
    Cries for a wider scope
To use the wider wings of human hope;
    A vision of the common good
Opens the prison-door of solitude;
    And, once beyond the wall,
    Breathing the ampler air,
    The heart becomes aware
That life without a country is not life at all.
    A country worthy of a freeman's love;
    A country worthy of a good man's prayer;
    A country strong, and just, and brave, and
        fair,—
    A woman's form of beauty throned above
    The shrine where noble aspirations meet —
    To live for her is great, to die is sweet!

Heirs of the rugged pioneers
Who dreamed this dream and made it true,
Remember that they dreamed for you.
They did not fear their fate
In those tempestuous years,
But put their trust in God, and with keen eyes,
Trained in the open air for looking far,
They saw the many-million-acred land
Won from the desert by their hand,
Swiftly among the nations rise, —
Texas a sovereign State,
And on her brow a star!

III

THE CONSTELLATION

How strange that the nature of light is a thing
beyond our ken,
And the flame of the tiniest candle flows from a
fountain sealed!
How strange that the meaning of life, in the little
lives of men,
So often baffles our search with a mystery un-
revealed!

But the larger life of man, as it moves in its sec-
ular sweep,
Is the working out of a Sovereign Will whose
ways appear;
And the course of the journeying stars on the
dark blue boundless deep,
Is the place where our science rests in the reign
of law most clear.

I would read the story of Texas as if it were
written on high;
I would look from afar to follow her path
through the calms and storms;
With a faith in the worldwide sway of the Reason
that rules in the sky,
And gathers and guides the starry host in
clusters and swarms.

When she rose in the pride of her youth, she seemed to be moving apart,
As a single star in the South, self-limited, self-possessed;
But the law of the constellation was written deep in her heart,
And she heard when her sisters called, from the North and the East and the West.

They were drawn together and moved by a common hope and aim —
The dream of a sign that should rule a third of the heavenly arch;
The soul of a people spoke in their call, and Texas came
To enter the splendid circle of States in their onward march.

So the glory gathered and grew and spread from sea to sea,
And the stars of the great republic lent each other light;
For all were bound together in strength, and each was free —
Suddenly broke the tempest out of the ancient night!

It came as a clash of the force that drives and
the force that draws;
And the stars were riven asunder, the heavens
were desolate,
While brother fought with brother, each for his
country's cause —
But the country of one was the Nation, the
country of other the State.

Oh, who shall measure the praise or blame in a
strife so vast?
And who shall speak of traitors or tyrants
when all were true?
We lift our eyes to the sky, and rejoice that the
storm is past,
And we thank the God of all that the Union
shines in the blue.

Yea, it glows with the glory of peace and the
hope of a mighty race,
High over the grave of broken chains and buried
hates;
And the great, big star of Texas is shining clear in
its place
In the constellate symbol and sign of the free
United States.

IV

AFTER THE PIONEERS

After the pioneers —
Big-hearted, big-handed lords of the axe and the plow and the rifle,
Tan-faced tamers of horses and lands, themselves remaining tameless,
Full of fighting, labour and romance, lovers of rude adventure —
After the pioneers have cleared the way to their homes and graves on the prairies:

After the State-builders —
Zealous and jealous men, dreamers, debaters, often at odds with each other,
All of them sure it is well to toil and to die, if need be,
Just for the sake of founding a country to leave to their children —
After the builders have done their work and written their names upon it:

After the civil war —
Wildest of all storms, cruel and dark and seemingly wasteful,
Tearing up by the root the vines that were splitting the old foundations,
Washing away with a rain of blood and tears the dust of slavery,
After the cyclone has passed and the sky is fair to the far horizon;
After the era of plenty and peace has come with full hands to Texas,
Then — what then?

Is it to be the life of an indolent heir, fat-witted
and self-contented,
Dwelling at ease in the house that others have
builded,
Boasting about the country for which he has
done nothing?
Is it to be an age of corpulent, deadly-dull pros-
perity,
Richer and richer crops to nourish a race of Phi-
listines,
Bigger and bigger cities full of the same confusion
and sorrow,
The people increasing mightily but no increase of
the joy?
Is this what the forerunners wished and toiled to
win for you,
This the reward of war and the fruitage of high
endeavor,
This the goal of your hopes and the vision that
satisfies you?

Nay, stand up and answer — I can read what is
in your hearts —
You, the children of those who followed the wild
bees,
You, the children of those who served the Lone
Star,
Now that the hives are full and the star is fixed
in the constellation,
I know that the best of you still are lovers of
sweetness and light!

You hunger for honey that comes from invisible gardens;
Pure, translucent, golden thoughts and feelings and inspirations,
Sweetness of all the best that has bloomed in the mind of man.

You rejoice in the light that is breaking along the borders of science;
The hidden rays that enable a man to look through a wall of stone;
The unseen, fire-filled wings that carry his words across the ocean;
The splendid gift of flight that shines, half-captured, above him;
The gleam of a thousand half-guessed secrets, just ready to be discovered!
You dream and devise great things for the coming race —
Children of yours who shall people and rule the domain of Texas;
They shall know, they shall comprehend more than their fathers,
They shall grow in the vigour of well-rounded manhood and womanhood,
Riper minds, richer hearts, finer souls, the only true wealth of a nation —
The league-long fields of the State are pledged to ensure this harvest!

Your old men have dreamed this dream and your young men have seen this vision.
The age of romance has not gone, it is only beginning;
Greater words than the ear of man has heard are waiting to be spoken,
Finer arts than the eyes of man have seen are sleeping to be awakened —
Science exploring the scope of the world,
Poetry breathing the hope of the world,
Music to measure and lead the onward march of man!

Come, ye honoured and welcome guests from the elder nations,
Princes of science and arts and letters,
Look on the walls that embody the generous dream of one of the old men of Texas,
Enter these halls of learning that rise in the land of the pioneer's log-cabin,
Read the confessions of faith that are carved on the stones around you:
Faith in the worth of the smallest fact and the laws that govern the starbeams —
Faith in the beauty of truth and the truth of perfect beauty,
Faith in the God who creates the souls of men by knowledge and love and worship.

This is the faith of the New Democracy —
Proud and humble, patiently pressing forward,
Praising her heroes of old and training her future leaders,
Seeking her crown in a nobler race of men and women —
After the pioneers, sweetness and light!

October, 1912.

TURN O' THE TIDE

THE tide flows in to the harbour, —
The bold tide, the gold tide, the flood o' the sunlit sea, —
And the little ships riding at anchor,
Are swinging and slanting their prows to the ocean, panting
To lift their wings to the wide wild air,
And venture a voyage they know not where, —
To fly away and be free!

The tide runs out of the harbour, —
The low tide, the slow tide, the ebb o' the moonlit bay, —
And the little ships rocking at anchor,
Are rounding and turning their bows to the landward, yearning
To breathe the breath of the sun-warmed strand,
To rest in the lee of the high hill land, —
To hold their haven and stay!

My heart goes round with the vessels, —
My wild heart, my child heart, in love with the sea and the land, —
And the turn o' the tide passes through it,
In rising and falling with mystical currents, calling
At morn, to range where the far waves foam,
At night, to a harbour in love's true home,
With the hearts that understand!

Seal Harbour, August 12, 1911.

RAPPEL D'AMOUR

COME home, my love, come home!
The twilight is falling,
The whippoorwill calling,
The night is very near,
And the darkness full of fear,
Come home to my arms, come home!

Come home, my love, come home!
In folly we parted,
And now, lonely hearted,
I know you look in vain
For a love like mine again;
Come home to my arms, come home!

Come home, dear love, come home!
I've much to forgive you,
And more yet to give you.
I'll put a little light
In the window every night, —
Come home to my arms, come home.

THE FIRST BIRD O' SPRING

TO OLIVE WHEELER

WINTER on Mount Shasta,
April down below;
Golden hours of glowing sun,
Sudden showers of snow!
Under leafless thickets
Early wild-flowers cling;
But, oh, my dear, I'm fain to hear
The first bird o' Spring!

Alders are in tassel,
Maples are in bud;
Waters of the blue McCloud
Shout in joyful flood;
Through the giant pine-trees
Flutters many a wing;
But, oh, my dear, I long to hear
The first bird o' Spring!

Candle-light and fire-light
Mingle at " the Bend; "
'Neath the roof of Bo-hai-pan
Light and shadow blend.
Sweeter than a wood-thrush
A maid begins to sing;
And, oh, my dear, I'm glad to hear
The first bird o' Spring!

The Bend, California, April 29, 1913.

"GRAN' BOULE"

A SEAMAN'S TALE OF THE SEA

WE men that go down for a livin' in ships to the sea, —
We love it a different way from you poets that 'bide on the land.
We are fond of it, sure! But, you take it as comin' from me,
There's a fear and a hate in our love that a landsman can't understand.

Oh, who could help likin' the salty smell, and the blue
Of the waves that are lazily breathin' as if they dreamed in the sun?
She's a Sleepin' Beauty, the sea, — but you can't tell what she'll do;
And the seamen never trust her, — they know too well what she's done!

She's a wench like one that I saw in a singin'-play, —
Carmen they called her, — Lord, what a life her lovers did lead!
She'd cuddle and kiss you, and sing you and dance you away;
And then, — she'd curse you, and break you, and throw you down like a weed.

You may chance it awhile with the girls like that,
if you please;
But you want a woman to trust when you settle
down with a wife;
And a seaman's thought of growin' old at his
ease
Is a snug little house on the land to shelter the
rest of his life.

So that was old Poisson's dream, — did you know
the Cap'?
A brown little Frenchman, clever, and brave, and
quick as a fish, —
Had a wife and kids on the other side of the map, —
And a rose-covered cottage for them and him was
his darlin' wish.

"I 'ave sail," says he, in his broken-up Frenchy
talk,
"Mos' forty-two year; I 'ave go on all part of
de worl' dat ees wet.
I'm seeck of de boat and de water. I rader walk
Wid ma Josephine in one garden; an' eef we get
tire', we set!

"You see dat *bateau, Sainte Brigitte?* I bring
'er dh'are
From de Breton coas', by gar, jus' feefteen year
bifore.
She ole w'en she come on Kebec, but Holloway
Frères
Dey buy 'er, an' hire me run 'er along dat dam'
Nort' Shore.

"Dose engine one leetl' bit cranky, — too ole,
you see, —
She roll and peetch in de wave'. But I lak' 'er
pretty well;
An' dat sheep she lak' 'er captaine, sure, dat's me!
Wit' forty ton coal in de bunker, I tek' dat sheep
t'rou' hell.

"But I don' wan' risk it no more; I had *bonne
chance:*
I save already ten t'ousan' dollar', dat's plenty I
s'pose!
Nex' winter I buy dat house wid de garden on
France
An' I tell *adieu* to de sea, and I leev' on de lan'
in ripose."

All summer he talked of his house,— you could
see the flowers
Abloom, and the pear-trees trained on the garden-
wall so trim,
And the Captain awalkin' and smokin' away the
hours, —
He thought he had done with the sea, but the
sea hadn't done with him!

It was late in the fall when he made the last
regular run,
Clear down to the Esquimault Point and back
with his rickety ship;
She hammered and pounded a lot, for the storms
had begun;
But he drove her, — and went for his season's pay
at the end of the trip.

Now the Holloway Brothers are greedy and thin
little men,
With their eyes set close together, and money's
their only God;
So they told the Cap' he must run the "Bridget"
again,
To fetch a cargo from Moisie, two thousand quin-
tals of cod.

He said the season was over. They said: "Not yet.
You finish the whole of your job, old man, or you don't draw a cent!"
(They had the "Bridget" insured for all they could get.)
And the Captain objected, and cursed, and cried. But he *went.*

They took on the cargo at Moisie, and folks beside, —
Three traders, a priest, and a couple of nuns, and a girl
For a school at Quebec, — when the Captain saw her he sighed,
And said: "Ma littl' Fifi got hair lak' dat, all curl!"

The snow had fallen a foot, and the wind was high,
When the "Bridget" butted her way thro' the billows on Moisie bar.
The darkness grew with the gale, not a star in the sky,
And the Captain swore: "We mus' make *Sept Isles* to-night, by gar!"

He couldn't go back, for he didn't dare to turn;
The sea would have thrown the ship like a mustang noosed with a rope;
For the monstrous waves were leapin' high astern,
And the shelter of Seven Island Bay was the only hope.

There's a bunch of broken hills half sunk in the mouth
Of the bay, with their jagged peaks afoam; and the Captain thought
He could pass to the north; but the sea kept shovin' him south,
With her harlot hands in the snow-blind murk, till she had him caught.

She had waited forty years for a night like this, —
Did he think he could leave her now, and live in a cottage, the fool?
She headed him straight for the island he couldn't miss;
And heaved his boat in the dark, — and smashed it against *Gran' Boule.*

How the Captain and half of the people clambered ashore,
Through the surf and the snow in the gloom of that horrible night,
There's no one ever will know; for two days more
The death-white shroud of the tempest covered the island from sight.

How they suffered, and struggled, and died, will never be told;
We discovered them all at last when we reached *Gran' Boule* with a boat;
The drowned and the frozen were lyin' stiff and cold,
And the poor little girl with the curls was wrapped in the Captain's coat.

Go write your song of the sea as the landsmen do,
And call her your "great sweet mother," your "bride," and all the rest;
She was made to be loved, — but remember, she won't love you, —
The men who trust her the least are the sailors who know her the best.

HEROES OF THE "TITANIC"

HONOUR the brave who sleep
Where the lost "Titanic" lies,
The men who knew what a man must do
When he looks Death in the eyes.

"Women and children first," —
Ah, strong and tender cry!
The sons whom women had borne and nursed,
Remembered, — and dared to die.

The boats crept off in the dark:
The great ship groaned: and then, —
O stars of the night, who saw that sight,
Bear witness, *These were men!*

November 9, 1912.

THE STANDARD-BEARER

I

"HOW can I tell," Sir Edward said,
"Who has the right or the wrong o' this thing?
Cromwell stands for the people's cause,
Charles is crowned by the ancient laws;
English meadows are sopping red,
Englishmen striking each other dead, —
Times are black as a raven's wing.
Out of the ruck and the mirk I see
Only one thing!
The King has trusted his banner to me,
And I must fight for the King."

II

Into the thick of the Edgehill fight
  Sir Edward rode with a shout; and the ring
  Of grim-faced, hard-hitting Parliament men
  Swallowed him up, — it was one against ten!
He fought for the standard with all his might,
Never again did he come to sight —
  Victor, hid by the raven's wing!
After the battle had passed we found
    Only one thing, —
The hand of Sir Edward gripped around
  The banner-staff of his King.

PEACE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

O LORD our God, Thy mighty hand
Hath made our country free;
From all her broad and happy land
May praise arise to Thee.
Fulfill the promise of her youth,
Her liberty defend;
By law and order, love and truth,
America befriend!

The strength of every State increase
In Union's golden chain;
Her thousand cities fill with peace,
Her million fields with grain.
The virtues of her mingled blood
In one new people blend;
By unity and brotherhood,
America befriend!

O suffer not her feet to stray;
But guide her untaught might,
That she may walk in peaceful day,
And lead the world in light.
Bring down the proud, lift up the poor,
Unequal ways amend;
By justice, nation-wide and sure,
America befriend!

Thro' all the waiting land proclaim
Thy gospel of good-will;
And may the music of Thy name
In every bosom thrill.
O'er hill and vale, from sea to sea,
Thy holy reign extend;
By faith and hope and charity,
America befriend!

CHRISTMAS TEARS

THE day returns by which we date our years:
Day of the joy of giving, — that means love;
Day of the joy of living, — that means hope;
Day of the Royal Child, — and day that brings
To older hearts the gift of Christmas tears!

Look, how the candles twinkle through the tree,
The children shout when baby claps his hands,
The room is full of laughter and of song!
Your lips are smiling, dearest, — tell me why
Your eyes are brimming full of Christmas tears?

Was it a silent voice that joined the song?
A vanished face that glimmered once again
Among the happy circle round the tree?
Was it an unseen hand that touched your cheek
And brought the secret gift of Christmas tears?

Not dark and angry like the winter storm
Of selfish grief, — but full of starry gleams,
And soft and still that others may not weep, —
Dews of remembered happiness descend
To bless us with the gift of Christmas tears.

Ah, lose them not, dear heart, — life has no pearls
More pure than memories of joy love-shared.
See, while we count them one by one with prayer,
The Heavenly hope that lights the Christmas tree
Has made a rainbow in our Christmas tears!

DOROTHEA

1888–1912

A DEEPER crimson in the rose,
A deeper blue in sky and sea,
And ever, as the summer goes,
A deeper loss in losing thee!

A deeper music in the strain
Of hermit-thrush from lonely tree;
And deeper grows the sense of gain
My life has found in having thee.

A deeper love, a deeper rest,
A deeper joy in all I see;
And ever deeper in my breast
A silver song that comes from thee!

Mount Desert, August 1, 1912.

THREE PRAYERS FOR SLEEP AND WAKING

I

BEDTIME

ERE thou sleepest gently lay
Every troubled thought away:
Put off worry and distress
As thou puttest off thy dress:
Drop thy burden and thy care
In the quiet arms of prayer.

Lord, Thou knowest how I live,
All I've done amiss forgive:
All of good I've tried to do,
Strengthen, bless, and carry through:
All I love in safety keep,
While in Thee I fall asleep.

II

NIGHT WATCH

If slumber should forsake
  Thy pillow in the dark,
  Fret not thyself to mark
How long thou liest awake.
There is a better way;
  Let go the strife and strain,
  Thine eyes will close again,
If thou wilt only pray.

Lord, Thy peaceful gift restore,
Give my body sleep once more:
While I wait my soul will rest
Like a child upon Thy breast.

III

NEW DAY

Ere thou risest from thy bed,
Speak to God Whose wings were spread
O'er thee in the helpless night:
Lo, He wakes thee now with light!
Lift thy burden and thy care
In the mighty arms of prayer.

Lord, the newness of this day
Calls me to an untried way:
Let me gladly take the road,
Give me strength to bear my load,
Thou my guide and helper be—
I will travel through with Thee.

The Mission Inn,
California, Easter, 1913.

INSCRIPTION FOR A TOMB IN ENGLAND

READ here, O friend unknown,
Our grief, of her bereft;
Yet think not tears alone
Within our hearts are left.
The gifts she came to give,
Her heavenly love and cheer,
Have made us glad to live
And die without a fear.

1912.

THE TALISMAN

WHAT is Fortune, what is Fame?
Futile gold and phantom name, —
Riches buried in a cave,
Glory written on a grave.

What is Friendship? Something deep
That the heart can spend and keep:
Wealth that greatens while we give,
Praise that heartens us to live.

Come, my friend, and let us prove
Life's true talisman is love!
By this charm we shall elude
Poverty and solitude.

January 21, 1914.

THORN AND ROSE

FAR richer than a thornless rose
Whose branch with beauty never glows,
Is that which every June adorns
With perfect bloom among its thorns.

Merely to live without a pain
Is little gladness, little gain,
Ah, welcome joy tho' mixt with grief, —
The thorn-set flower that crowns the leaf.

June 20, 1914.

STAIN NOT THE SKY

YE gods of battle, lords of fear,
Who work your iron will as well
As once ye did with sword and spear,
With rifled gun and rending shell, —
Masters of sea and land, forbear
The fierce invasion of the inviolate air!

With patient daring man hath wrought
A hundred years for power to fly;
And will you make his wingéd thought
A hovering horror in the sky,
Where flocks of human eagles sail,
Dropping their bolts of death on hill and dale?

Ah no, the sunset is too pure,
The dawn too fair, the noon too bright
For wings of terror to obscure
Their beauty, and betray the night
That keeps for man, above his wars,
The tranquil vision of untroubled stars.

Pass on, pass on, ye lords of fear!
Your footsteps in the sea are red,
And black on earth your paths appear
With ruined homes and heaps of dead.
Pass on to end your transient reign,
And leave the blue of heaven without a stain.

The wrong ye wrought will fall to dust,
The right ye shielded will abide;
The world at last will learn to trust
In law to guard, and love to guide;
And Peace of God that answers prayer
Will fall like dew from the inviolate air.

March 5, 1914.

CARMINA FESTIVA

HOW SPRING COMES TO SHASTA JIM

I NEVER saw no " red gods "; I dunno wot's a " lure ";
But if it's sumpin' takin', then Spring has got it sure;
An' it doesn't need no Kiplin's, nor yet no London Jacks,
To make up guff about it, while settin' in their shacks.

It's sumpin' very simple 'at happens in the Spring,
But it changes all the lookin's of every blessed thing;
The buddin' woods look bigger, the mounting twice as high,
But the house looks kindo smaller, tho I couldn't tell ye why.

It's cur'ous wot a show-down the month of April makes,
Between the reely livin', an' the things that's only fakes!
Machines an' barns an' buildin's, they never give no sign;
But the livin' things look lively when Spring is on the line.

She doesn't come too suddin, nor she doesn't come too slow;
Her gaits is some cayprishus, an' the next ye never know, —
A single-foot o' sunshine, a buck o' snow er hail, —
But don't be disapp'inted, for Spring ain't goin' ter fail.

She's loopin' down the hillside, — the driffs is fadin' out.
She's runnin' down the river, — d'ye see them risin' trout?
She's loafin' down the canyon, — the squaw-bed's growin' blue,
An' the teeny Johnny-jump-ups is jest a-peekin' thru.

A thousan' miles o' pine-trees, with Douglas firs between,
Is waitin' for her fingers to freshen up their green;
With little tips o' brightness the firs 'ill sparkle thick,
An' every yaller pine-tree, a giant candle-stick!

The underbrush is risin' an' spreadin' all around,
Just like a mist o' greenness 'at hangs above the ground;
A million manzanitas 'ill soon be full o' pink;
So saddle up, my sonny, — it's time to ride, I think!

We'll ford or swim the river, becos there ain't no bridge;
We'll foot the gulches careful, an' lope along the ridge;
We'll take the trail to Nowhere, an' travel till we tire,
An' camp beneath a pine-tree, an' sleep beside the fire.

We'll see the blue-quail chickens, an' hear 'em pipin' clear;
An' p'raps we'll sight a brown-bear, or else a bunch o' deer;
But never a heathen goddess or god 'ill meet our eyes;
For why? There isn't any! They're just a pack o' lies!

Oh, wot's the use o' "red gods," an' "Pan," an' all that stuff?
The natcheral facts o' Springtime is wonderful enuff!
An' if there's Someone made 'em, I guess He understood,
To be alive in Springtime would make a man feel good.

California, 1913.

ANGLERS' FIRESIDE SONG

OH, the angler's path is a very merry way,
And his road through the world is bright;
For he lives with the laughing stream all day,
And he lies by the fire at night.

Sing hey nonny, ho nonny
And likewise well-a-day!
The angler's life is a very jolly life
And that's what the anglers say!

Oh, the angler plays for the pleasure of the game,
And his creel may be full or light,
But the tale that he tells will be just the same
When he lies by the fire at night.

Sing hey nonny, ho nonny
And likewise well-a-day!
We love the fire and the music of the lyre,
And that's what the anglers say!

To the San Francisco Fly-Casting Club, April, 1913.

A BUNCH OF TROUT-FLIES

For Archie Ruttledge

HERE'S a half-a-dozen flies,
Just about the proper size
For the trout of Dickey's Run,—
Luck go with them every one!

Dainty little feathered beauties,
Listen now, and learn your duties;
Not to tangle in the box;
Not to catch on logs or rocks,
Boughs that wave or weeds that float,
Nor in the angler's " pants " or coat!
Not to lure the glutton frog
From his banquet in the bog;
Nor the lazy chub to fool,
Splashing idly round the pool;
Nor the sullen hornèd pout
From the mud to hustle out!

None of this vulgarian crew,
Dainty flies, is game for you.
Darting swiftly through the air
Guided by the angler's care,
Light upon the flowing stream
Like a wingèd fairy dream;
Float upon the water dancing,
Through the lights and shadows glancing,
Till the rippling current brings you
And the filmy leader swings you
Where a speckled beauty lies
Watching you with hungry eyes.

Here's your game and here's your prize!
Hover near him, lure him, tease him,
Do your very best to please him,
Dancing on the water foamy,
Like the frail and fair Salome,
Till the monarch yields at last;
Rises, and you have him fast!
Then remember well your duty, —
Do not lose, but land, your booty;
For the finest fish of all is
Salvelinus Fontinalis.

So, you plumed illusions, go,
Let my comrade Archie know
Every day he goes a-fishing
I'll be with him in well-wishing.
Most of all when lunch is laid
In the dappled orchard shade,
With Will, Corinne, and Dixie too,
Sitting as we used to do
Round the white cloth on the grass
While the lazy hours pass,
And the brook's contented tune
Lulls the sleepy afternoon, —
Then's the time my heart will be
With that pleasant company!

June 17, 1913.

A BALLAD OF SANTA CLAUS

For the St. Nicholas Society of New York

AMONG the earliest saints of old, before the first Hegira,
I find the one whose name we hold, St. Nicholas of Myra:
The best-beloved name, I guess, in sacred nomenclature, —
The patron-saint of helpfulness, and friendship, and good-nature.

A bishop and a preacher too, a famous theologian,
He stood against the Arian crew and fought them like a Trojan:
But when a poor man told his need and begged an alms in trouble,
He never asked about his creed, but quickly gave him double.

Three pretty maidens, so they say, were longing
to be married;
But they were paupers, lack-a-day, and so the
suitors tarried.
St. Nicholas gave each maid a purse of golden
ducats chinking,
And then, for better or for worse, they wedded
quick as winking.

Once, as he sailed, a storm arose; wild waves the
ship surrounded;
The sailors wept and tore their clothes, and
shrieked "We'll all be drownded!"
St. Nicholas never turned a hair; serenely shone
his halo;
He simply said a little prayer, and all the billows
lay low.

The wicked keeper of an inn had three small ur-
chins taken,
And cut them up in a pickle-bin, and salted them
for bacon.
St. Nicholas came and picked them out, and put
their limbs together, —
They lived, they leaped, they gave a shout, "St.
Nicholas forever!"

And thus it came to pass, you know, that maids
without a nickel,
And sailor-lads when tempest blow, and children
in a pickle,
And every man that's fatherly, and every kindly
matron,
In choosing saints would all agree to call St.
Nicholas patron.

He comes again at Christmas-time and stirs us up
to giving;
He rings the merry bells that chime good-will to
all the living;
He blesses every friendly deed and every free do-
nation;
He sows the secret, golden seed of love through
all creation.

Our fathers drank to Santa Claus, the sixth of
each December,
And still we keep his feast because his virtues we
remember.
Among the saintly ranks he stood, with smiling
human features,
And said, "*Be good! But not too good to love your
fellow-creatures!*"

December 6, 1907.

THE LITTLE-NECK CLAM

A modern verse-sequence, showing how a native American subject, strictly realistic, may be treated in various manners adapted to the requirements of different magazines, thus combining Art-for-Art's-Sake with Writing-for-the-Market. Read at the First Dinner of the American Periodical Publishers' Association, in Washington, April, 1904.

I

THE ANTI-TRUST CLAM

For McClure's Magazine

THE clam that once, on Jersey's banks,
Was like the man who dug it, free,
Now slave-like thro' the market clanks
In chains of corporate tyranny.

The Standard Fish-Trust of New York
Holds every clam-bank in control;
And like base Beef and menial Pork,
The free-born Clam has lost its soul.

No more the bivalve treads the sands
In freedom's rapture, free from guilt:
It follows now the harsh commands
Of Morgiman and Rockabilt.

Rise, freemen, rise! Your wrath is just!
Call on the Sherman Act to dam
The floods of this devouring Trust,
And liberate the fettered Clam.

II

THE WHITMANIAC CLAM

For the Bookman

NOT Dante when he wandered by the river Arno,
Not Burns who plowed the banks and braes of bonnie Ayr,
Not even Shakspere on the shores of Avon, — ah, no!
Not one of those great bards did taste true Poet's Fare.

But Whitman, loafing in Long Island and New Jersey,
Found there the sustenance of mighty ode and psalm,
And while his rude emotions swam around in verse, he
Fed chiefly on the wild, impassioned, sea-born clam.

Thus in his work we feel the waves' bewildering motion,
And winds from mighty mud-flats, weird and wild:
His clam-filled bosom answered to the voice of ocean,
And rose and fell responsively with every tide.

III

IL MERCATORE ITALIANO DELLA CLAMMA

For the Century Magazine

"CLAM O! Fres' Clam!" How strange it sounds and sweet,
The Dago's cry along the New York street!
"Dago" we call him, like the thoughtless crowd;
And yet this humble man may well be proud
To hail from Petrarch's land, Boccaccio's home, —
Firenze, Gubbio, Venezia, Rome, —
From fair Italia, whose enchanted soil
Transforms the lowly cotton-seed to olive-oil.

To me his chant, with alien accent sung,
Brings back an echo of great Virgil's tongue:
It seems to cry against the city's woe, —
In liquid Latin syllables, — *Clamo!*
As thro' the crowded street his cart he jams
And cries aloud, ah, think of more than clams!
Receive his secret plaint with pity warm,
And grant Italia's plea for Tenement-House Reform!

IV

THE SOCIAL CLAM

For the Smart Set

FAIR Phyllis is another's bride:
Therefore I like to sit beside
Her at a very smart set dinner,
And whisper love, and try to win her.

The little-necks, — in number six, —
That from their pearly shells she picks
And swallows whole, — ah, is it selfish
To wish my heart among those shell-fish?

"But Phyllis is another's wife;
And if she should absorb thy life
'T would leave thy bosom vacant." — Well,
I'd keep at least thy empty shell!

V

THE RECREANT CLAM

For the Outlook

LOW dost thou lie amid the languid ooze,
Because thy slothful spirit doth refuse
The bliss of battle and the strain of strife.
Rise, craven clam, and lead the strenuous life!

ARS AGRICOLARIS

An Ode for the " Farmer's Dinner,"
University Club, New York,
January 23, 1913

ALL hail, ye famous Farmers!
Ye vegetable-charmers,
Who know the art of making barren earth
Smile with prolific mirth
And bring forth twins or triplets at a birth!
Ye scientific fertilizers of the soil,
And horny-handed sons of toil!
Tonight from all your arduous cares released,
With manly brows no longer sweat-impearled,
Ye hold your annual feast,
And like the Concord farmers long ago,
Ye meet above the " Bridge " below,
And draw the cork heard round the world!

What memories are yours! What tales
Of triumph have your tongues rehearsed,
Telling how ye have won your first
Potatoes from the stubborn mead,
(Almost as many as ye sowed for seed!)
And how the luscious cabbages and kails
Have bloomed before you in their bed
At seven dollars a head!
And how your onions took a prize
For bringing tears into the eyes
Of a hard-hearted cook! And how ye slew
The Dragon Cut-worm at a stroke!
And how ye broke,
Routed, and put to flight the horrid crew
Of vile potato-bugs and Hessian flies!
And how ye did not quail
Before th' invading armies of San José Scale,
But met them bravely with your little pail
Of poison, which ye put upon each tail
O' the dreadful beasts and made their courage fail!
And how ye did acquit yourselves like men
In fields of agricultural strife, and then,
Like generous warriors, sat you down at ease
And gently to your gardener said, "Let us
have *Pease!*"

But *were* there Pease? Ah, no, dear Farmers, no!
The course of Nature is not ordered so.
For when we want a vegetable most,
She holds it back;
And when we boast
To our week-endly friends
Of what we'll give them on our farm, alack,
Those things the old dam, Nature, never sends.
O Pease in bottles, Sparrow-grass in jars,
How often have ye saved from scars
Of shame, and deep embarrassment,
The disingenuous farmer-gent,
To whom some wondering guest has cried,
"How *do* you raise such Pease and Sparrow-grass?"
Whereat the farmer-gent has not denied
The compliment, but smiling has replied,
"To raise such things you must have lots of glass."

From wiles like these, true Farmers, hold aloof;
Accept no praise unless you have the proof.
If niggard Nature should withhold the green
And sugary Pea, welcome the humble Bean;
Give it the place of honor at your table, —
To speak for 'tself the Bean is amply able!
Even the easy Radish, and the Beet,
If grown by your own toil are extra sweet!
Let malefactors of great wealth and banker-felons
Rejoice in foreign artichokes, imported melons;
But you, my Farmers, at your frugal board
Spread forth the fare your Sabine Farms afford.
Say to Mæcenas, when he is your guest,
" No peaches! try this turnip, 'tis my best."
Thus shall ye learn from labors in the field
What honesty a farmer's life may yield,
And like G. Washington in early youth,
Though cherries fail, produce a crop of truth.

But think me not too strict, O followers of the plow
Some place for fiction in your lives I would allow.
In January when the world is drear,
And bills come in, and no results appear,
And snow-storms veil the skies,
And ice the streamlet clogs,
Then may you warm your heart with pleasant lies
And revel in the seedsmen's catalogues!
What visions and what dreams are these
Of cauliflowers obese, —
Of giant celery, taller than a mast, —
Of strawberries
Like red pincushions, round and vast, —
Of succulent and spicy gumbo, —
Of cantaloupes, as big as Jumbo, —
Of high-strung beans without the strings, —
And of a host of other wild, romantic things!

Oh, why should Starr declare
That modern habits mental force impair?
And why should H. Marquand complain
That jokes as good as his will never come again?
And why should Bridges wear a gloomy mien
About the lack of fiction for his Magazine?
The seedsman's catalogue is all we need
To stir our dull imaginations
To new creations,
And lead us, by the hand
Of Hope, into a fairy-land.

So dream, my friendly Farmers, as you will;
And let your fancy all your garners fill
With wondrous crops; but always recollect
That Nature gives us less than we expect.
Scorn not the city where you earn the wealth
That, spent upon your farms, renews your health;
And tell your wife, whene'er the bills have shocked her,
"A country-place is cheaper than a doctor."
May roses bloom for you, and may you find
Your richest harvest in a tranquil mind.

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